



## Chamber and Labor Both Agree

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, June 16, 2008

### City Hall Diary

Last week the city council unanimously approved a concession agreement for the new airport terminal. Believe it or not, the Chamber of Commerce and the Working Partnerships Labor Union both agreed on the selection. Whew! If only agreements like this could happen more often.

However, in my opinion, the best part of this selection is that many local small businesses that have made their mark in San Jose by risking their capital years ago will now have the opportunity to be showcased at the airport. These include local favorites like Schurra's Chocolates on The Alameda, Chiramonte's Deli on North Thirteenth, Hickleebee's Children's Bookstore on Lincoln Ave, Willow Street Pizza, Paolo's and San Jose Sharks Bar & Grill. I can't wait. Can you just imagine all of these great businesses all in one location? San Jose here we come!

Last July, during our council break, I co-hosted a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce to raise the awareness that local small businesses should have a fair chance of being selected as tenants at the airport. The attendance was great and I believe that meeting played a part in bringing awareness; thus, we have many San Jose small business tenants moving forward.

City staff and a committee representing labor, the chamber and the convention visitors' bureau reviewed the proposals that were submitted. The council was not directly involved, although I did make my support known for local businesses. By awarding these contracts, the city and the airport do not have to manage individual rental agreements with each tenant. If we did, it could take a lot of staff time and inevitably become political by having individual tenants lobby the council members.

The new concessions will not only change perceptions of our airport, but they are projected to bring in double the sales tax from today's

amount of \$280,000 to \$564,000. Revenue to the airport via rents will increase from \$3.7 million to \$8.2 million, and there will be 271 new jobs. Granted, they are service jobs; however, they will be paid living-wage hourly rates.

As much as the airport is criticized, most people still find it valuable for air travel. In fact, a former colleague of mine who happens to live in Menlo Park chooses to drive to San Jose instead of San Francisco Airport (SFO) to fly to Seattle every week. Even though SFO is closer, he finds San Jose's airport easier to get in and out of.

San Jose will have a new face to show off in 2010 and I hope that you all check it out. Whether you are traveling or not, it will be worth the visit.

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